

# Psalms Playlist

## Week 7 | Psalm 51

*David King, author*

*This week's Engage God Daily was written by guest author, David King.*

### Day 1

#### Read

##### Psalm 51 (NIV)

*For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.*

*<sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your unfailing love;  
according to your great compassion  
blot out my transgressions.*

*<sup>2</sup> Wash away all my iniquity  
and cleanse me from my sin.*

*<sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is always before me.*

*<sup>4</sup> Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight;  
so you are right in your verdict  
and justified when you judge.*

*<sup>5</sup> Surely I was sinful at birth,  
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*

*<sup>6</sup> Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;  
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.*

*<sup>7</sup> Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;  
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*

*<sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.*

*<sup>9</sup> Hide your face from my sins  
and blot out all my iniquity.*

*<sup>10</sup> Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

*<sup>11</sup> Do not cast me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.*

*<sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*

*<sup>13</sup> Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
so that sinners will turn back to you.*

*<sup>14</sup> Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,  
you who are God my Savior,  
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.*

*<sup>15</sup> Open my lips, Lord,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.*

*<sup>16</sup> You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;  
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.*

*<sup>17</sup> My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart  
you, God, will not despise.*

*<sup>18</sup> May it please you to prosper Zion,  
to build up the walls of Jerusalem.*

*<sup>19</sup> Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous,  
in burnt offerings offered whole;  
then bulls will be offered on your altar.*

## Reflect

We all have had the experience of going from one place to another only to come upon a stretch of impassable road. My family lives in Melissa, Texas (northeast of McKinney), and most of Melissa has been under construction for over five years. Someone asked me after I moved in if I was going to like living in Melissa. We love our little town even though it is quite rapidly becoming a larger city. My response to my friend in humorous jest was, “Sure I will love it, if they ever finish it.” Our roads have been under construction for a long time and we often have to find a detour. Once in a while we find ourselves stuck and realize there is no detour around a difficult stretch of road. All we can do is sit and wait.

When it comes to requesting forgiveness or restoring a relationship, it often involves going through areas we most likely prefer to avoid, especially if the relationship restoration is with God. David, the king of Israel, shows us that genuine repentance is the only way to affectively restore our relationship with God.

Why do we avoid repentance of sin and restoration with God and others? Is it because it is hard work? Is it because of pride? Is it because of fear? Those are just three reasons, and there are many others. But when you study the Scriptures, you discover that the entire message of the Bible is a message that implores us to repent—yes, an unpopular message today.

The Old Testament prophets preached repentance. John the Baptist preached repentance. Peter and Paul preached repentance. The last words from the risen Christ in the first three chapters of Revelation to the seven churches of Asia Minor were calls to repent. In order for restoration with God and our fellow-man, we must travel through that stretch of road that is often times most difficult—and it runs right through the middle of the valley of repentance.

This week, I invite you to travel that road and see what true, genuine repentance looks like. We are studying Psalm 51 which is King David's great prayer of confession after he had fallen into deep, dark, dreadful sin with Bathsheba. In this psalm, we find the great king of Israel sitting on his throne in Jerusalem. Chosen of God as a symbol of power and purity among the people, David's kingdom is built up. His armies are victorious. Neighboring princes pay him homage. And yet, all of that is not enough to satisfy the lustful appetites of his being.

Having acquired victory, luxury, and ultimate gratification of the flesh, David saw one more thing he wanted. He desired and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite. He then covered up the sin by having Uriah placed at the front of the battle where Uriah would certainly fall to death. What David deceitfully planned is exactly what happened.

Any other king in the world could have done this and not a word would have been said, for kings were dictators who could do whatever they desired. But David was not "any other king." David was the king of God's chosen people. He was the anointed king of God, and therefore, what he did was wrong. While pagan kings could do what David did without a whisper of blame, David was Jehovah's anointed, and he would be held accountable for his actions.

For the better part of a year, David fooled himself and his nation. He thought he had the sin covered up. Uriah was dead. Bathsheba was now a part of his own family. He had brought her into the palace. Probably no one suspected any wrong doing. David fooled himself, his family, Bathsheba and her family, and he fooled the entire nation—all but one particular man.

The cover-up did not make it past the prophet Nathan who, coming at the direction of God, said to David, "You are the man" (2 Samuel 12:7). Nathan continues to chide David by telling him that he has sinned against God and that he must deal with that sin.

As David deals with that sin, he goes before God in genuine repentance. This is a man who grievously sinned. He committed a heinous sexual sin. He committed the sins of murder and of lies and cover-ups. But because he sincerely repented to God, one can understand why the Lord says of David that he is a man after his own heart (Acts 13:22).

In order for cleansing and restoration to take place, we must choose to travel through the valley of repentance. It is a stretch of road that is often difficult, lonely, and dark. But God's Word (in this psalm and other passages) instructs us that we must not try to detour around the valley of repentance or look for a bypass if we want the same forgiveness and restoration that David experienced.

As we come before this psalm, we will see that there are unavoidable prerequisites for forgiveness and restoration in our lives individually and in the life of the church corporately. The other thing that we will see is that repentance is not something that we experience the

moment we trust Jesus as our Savior and then we never have to deal with it again. Repentance is a life-long assignment because sin is a cesspool of continuous temptation that we deal with each day.

So what are those unavoidable prerequisites to forgiveness and restoration? From David's prayer in Psalm 51, we will look at them this week. But for today, we must understand that there is no detour around this road; we must pass this way. We must be willing to travel this road to restoration even though it takes us right through the valley of repentance.

## Respond

We stated earlier that in the midst of David's luxury, there was still one thing he wanted, and she was another man's wife. What could have David have done differently?

Reflect on David's ultimate repentance. Since his repentance came after the prophet Nathan's confrontation, do you think David's repentance was genuine? Why or why not?

## Day 2

*David King, author*

## Read

### Psalm 51:1–10

*<sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your unfailing love;  
according to your great compassion  
blot out my transgressions.*

*<sup>2</sup> Wash away all my iniquity  
and cleanse me from my sin.*

*<sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is always before me.*

*<sup>4</sup> Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight;  
so you are right in your verdict  
and justified when you judge.*

*<sup>4</sup> Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight;  
so you are right in your verdict  
and justified when you judge.*

*<sup>5</sup> Surely I was sinful at birth,  
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*

*<sup>6</sup> Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;  
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.*

*<sup>7</sup> Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;  
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*

*<sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.*

*<sup>9</sup> Hide your face from my sins  
and blot out all my iniquity.*

*<sup>10</sup> Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

## Reflect

I wonder if David ever imagined that God would include his sin in a book for the whole world to read in every generation. David certainly could not have foreseen that Hollywood would portray his sin on silver screen. Aren't you glad that when we confess our sins God does not do us that way? Aren't you glad that when we confess our sins, he clears the record, covers it in Jesus' blood, and casts our sins in the depths of the sea?

King David had every intention of quickly moving on from his sin against Bathsheba. Yet, one day, David got a four-word message from Bathsheba that absolutely shattered his life — "I am with child" (2 Samuel 11:5). Instead of repenting at this point, he worked to cover it up. When that didn't work, he committed murder and covered that up as well.

There is a principle in the Bible which we need to underscore in our heart: those sins we cover, God will uncover. But those sins we uncover, God will cover. Proverbs puts it this way: "Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

God sent the prophet Nathan to David, and David heard four more words that ripped the camouflage from his soul when he said to David, "You are the man" (2 Samuel 12:7). And with those words, God began to melt the ice that had been packed around David's heart. David finally realized he had to do business with God.

David was shown that secret sin on the earth is open scandal in Heaven. He now comes to a most sacred place in his life, and we have been allowed to go with David into that place as he confesses his sin alone before God in Psalm 51.

Yesterday, we said that we must be willing to travel this road to restoration even though it takes us right through the valley of repentance. There is no detour around it. Second, we said that there were unavoidable prerequisites for forgiveness and restoration in our lives. We will look at the first prerequisite today:

***Prerequisite One: There must be a despair that requests forgiveness***

I use the word *despair*, and I use it intentionally. Before repentance ever comes there must be a desperation about the sin in my life.

David had not repented for almost a year because he had not become desperate before a Holy God. I have no doubt David regretted what he did. Perhaps he wished he had not made those mistakes. Maybe he said to himself, “If I only had it to do over...” Or, maybe he wished he had not gotten caught. But despite possible remorse, David never really repented because he had not despaired of his sin and iniquity until now.

Real repentance brings a desperateness before God. Our greatest need is to be forgiven and made right with God, and when David finally came to confront his sin, he went before God and spread it all out. He had a despair that requested forgiveness.

But what does that despair look like? There are three aspects to this type of despair.

*The despair that leads us to want forgiveness acknowledges guilt of sin.*

Look again at verses 1 and 2 and notice all of the words for sin in the Hebrew language. David uses the words *transgressions*, *iniquity*, and *sin*. We will examine this more on Day Five, but all three of those words mean something different in the Hebrew language. David is saying, “God, I have sinned in every way imaginable. I have rebelled against what I knew was right. I have been iniquitous in my actions. God, I have missed the mark of your purpose in my life” (paraphrase). Instead of further spelling out the details of his sin, David just goes before the Lord and says, “God, my worst problem is not what I have done; my worst problem is who I am” (paraphrase). David exhausts the Hebrew language for his sin.

As long as we say, “I’m not any worse than anyone else,” or “What *I* did is not nearly as bad as what *they* did,” we will never have victory over our sin. The despair that leads us to want forgiveness acknowledges guilt of sin.

But also, we see in Psalm 51:3-5: *The despair that leads us to want forgiveness assumes full responsibility.*

David is saying, “God, it is not that I have sinned against my fellow man, although that happened; but that happened because I sinned against you” (paraphrase). All sin is rebellion against God, and David assumes that responsibility and recognizes that God is right in judging him in that sin.

Notice that David did not try to blame anyone or anything else. David assumed full responsibility. The only way repentance ever comes is when we acknowledge our guilt and say, “God, not only have I sinned, but nobody else is responsible for my sin but me.”

We live in a society where we transfer blame to our parents, the government, our environment and culture we live in, and other people. We even blame the devil. We have got a “devil-made-me-do-it” philosophy. It is as if the devil is the antithesis of God and he can do anything he wants with my life, but that is not true.

We are never going to be forgiven of our sin when we blame others, including the devil, or when we blame circumstances. When we come before the Lord as David did, we have victory and we experience the forgiveness and restoration that David experienced. The despair that leads us to want forgiveness assumes full responsibility.

As we see in Psalm 51:7–9, *The despair that leads us to want forgiveness accepts God's way of cleansing.*

We never give up trying to manage our lives until we are desperate enough that we cry out to God. Until I despair of my sin, I often keep covering it up or excusing it. That is no way to overcome. I am never going to be forgiven until I am so desperate that I cry out to God to do something that only he can do.

When David started praying, he used some of the strongest verbs in the Hebrew language. He said “*Blot* out my transgressions. *Wash* away all my iniquity and *cleanse* me from my sin.” It is only when we are desperate about our sin that we get to this point of repentance. Just being aware, embarrassed, or concerned that we may get caught in our sin will never do. We only repent when we realize that we have offended the heart of a Holy God.

Have you ever experienced that kind of despair over your sin? I certainly have, and it drives me to my knees, as it certainly should. ***There must be a despair that requests forgiveness.*** That is the first prerequisite to forgiveness and restoration, and it only comes as we travel that difficult stretch of road that leads us through the valley of repentance. Tomorrow on Day Three, we will look at the second prerequisite to forgiveness and restoration.

## Respond

Why do you think David avoided repentance for approximately one year? Have there been times in your life when you've resisted the Spirit's call to repentance? Why did you wait?

What was missing in David's life that could have led him to repentance?

Reflect on how you would respond if someone accurately points out sin in your life. What would your response be?

## Day 3

*David King, author*

## Read

Psalm 51:10–14

*<sup>10</sup> Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

*<sup>11</sup> Do not cast me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.*

*<sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*

*<sup>13</sup> Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
so that sinners will turn back to you.*

*<sup>14</sup> Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,  
you who are God my Savior,  
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.*

## Reflect

I heard a funny story about a college boy who came home from school one weekend. He said to his mother, “Mom, some of the guys in the dorm went in together and purchased a pet goat for the dormitory.”

The college boy’s mother said, “How disgusting, Son! That’s awful. Won’t the smell be offensive?”

The college boy said, “Ah, the goat will get used to it.”

I suppose it is true that at times our sin can get so disgusting that even we do not recognize how bad things have spiraled out of control. Over the past couple of days, we have been looking at how King David became aware of the seriousness of his sin. He thought he had done a pretty good job of covering up. But the Lord was displeased with what David had done, and God made certain that it would not go unnoticed.

Heaven help the believer who thinks he/she can sin and fool God. Have you ever heard someone say, “You have no right to judge me. That’s God’s job. You let him take care of that.” There is a lot of truth in those statements. No one can adequately judge another person. We are never completely partial like God is. Either we are too harsh or we are too lenient; hence, the reason that judgment is better left to God. But be not mistaken, God will judge sin, and he will judge it swiftly and efficiently—often times more severely than another human will. And when the judgment comes from God, it will be just. Here’s the best part: when judgment comes from God, it will include sufficient measures of grace needed for the given situation. God knows what he is doing when he passes judgment on those he loves and cares for.

For all that David sinned and was judged for, David received even greater grace. Why did David receive such grace? It is because David finally submitted himself to the chastisement of God, and what he ultimately received was a forgiveness and restoration that he probably did not think was possible. We will see later that David probably believed he would be forgiven at some point, but probably not to the degree he was. God always gives more than we thought possible. But David also understood that there were prerequisites to forgiveness and restoration. We looked at the first prerequisite yesterday which is a despair that requests

forgiveness. David finally got desperate enough to deal with his sin. But here is the second prerequisite:

***Prerequisite Two: There must be a disgust that requires change***

David finally understood that real repentance not only comes to despair, but it leads to disgust. Look back at Psalm 51:7-8, and you'll see that here is a man who is saying, "I've lost the joy of it all" (paraphrase). He had not lost his relationship with God in a salvation sense. But he had lost his fellowship with God. He had lost the joy of his salvation. You see, God put a song in David's heart, but because of David's sin, that sin made an absolute monotone out of his life. He could not hear or perform any of the music anymore. He said, "Let the bones which you have crushed rejoice." He is saying, "God, I ache for this sin; it's as if my bones are broken" (paraphrase).

If anything is obvious to me in this Psalm, it is that David was thoroughly disgusted with his life of sin. He had enough. He is repulsed by it. A deeper look will reveal what David is disgusted by and what David calls out to God for.

*David cries out for a change from filth to fitness*

David was sick and tired of being sick and tired. He was not only desperate, but he was disgusted about his sin. He realized that if the change was ever going to take place, it would have two steps: a purging by God's own cleansing agents and a perceiving of God's wonders anew.

It is possible that David knew that at some point he might be clean again. I think he believed that could happen, and he believed God by faith or else he would not have asked for forgiveness. If you do not believe forgiveness is possible, then there is no need to ask for it. But somehow, by faith, God had revealed to David the idea that forgiveness is possible. That is proven by the fact that David requested forgiveness. Somehow God had revealed to David that He had the powerful cleansing agent that could restore him to fellowship with God again.

It is true that God has the cleansing agent that we need, and that agent is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the only hope we have that can make us clean. Even though David and the prophets of old did not know all that we now know, God allowed them to see that he had the power to wipe away all sin. That is why Isaiah the prophet said, "Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

God can take the dirt and filth from our lives and cleanse us just like he with David, but only because David, in his desperation and his disgust, cried out for God for a change from filth to fitness.

Look at Verses 10 and following. *David cries out for a change from death to life*

David is saying, “God, I know what is more wrong than what I have done. It is the heart which desired to sin. God, my heart is desperately wicked. It is deceitful before you. Lord, create in me a clean heart” (paraphrase).

We experience forgiveness and restoration at salvation when we first meet Jesus and he gives us a new heart. Then we walk in repentance so that we might not have our heart clogged up with unconfessed sin. And David was crying, “God, that new heart that you gave me when first I believed, unplug the arteries. God, give the life back to it. Lord, change me from within” (paraphrase).

At the beginning of each new year, we like to talk about New Year’s resolutions. Maybe you have made them. Did they work? If you are like me, sometimes they do and sometimes they do not. Perhaps you have tried to change your life. You have tried to reconstruct your life. You have tried to get rid of bad habits and take on good habits and you have never yet succeeded. Why, you even thought that becoming religious and joining a church might fix the problem. Perhaps there is still something in your life that you cannot fix and you have never had victory over. Victory comes when we are desperate about our sin, disgusted with our sin and we choose to walk through the middle of the valley of repentance and stop avoiding it.

To recap, we have said that there are two unavoidable prerequisites to forgiveness and restoration: *there must be a despair that requests forgiveness* and *there must be a disgust that requires change*. Tomorrow we will look at the third prerequisite, which is the most positive and encouraging one.

## Respond

Read David’s story in 2 Samuel 11. The last verse of that chapter says, “But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.” If this was the sort of thing that other kings could have done and nothing be said about it, why did God hold David to a higher standard?

In 2 Samuel 11, what is David’s attitude like and how does that differ from his attitude in Psalm 51? What brought about the change?

Spend some time with the Lord today and ask him to show you if there is anything in your life that is displeasing to him.

## Day 4

*David King, author*

### Read

Psalm 51:13–17

*<sup>13</sup> Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
so that sinners will turn back to you.  
<sup>14</sup> Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,  
you who are God my Savior,  
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.*

*<sup>15</sup> Open my lips, Lord,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.  
<sup>16</sup> You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;  
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.  
<sup>17</sup> My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart  
you, God, will not despise.*

## Reflect

It seems strange that, having found life's greatest treasure, so many of us Christ-followers prefer to remain silent about our discovery. Imagine if Alexander Fleming had decided to remain silent about his discovery of penicillin. Would he have stood by and watched multitudes suffering and dying of pneumonia, blood poisoning, and a host of other infections and been able to hold his tongue? His discovery, once declared, brought life to untold millions.

I never cease to be amazed at David's final words in his consecration of Psalm 51. David understood that if God was ever going to restore him, he would have a story to tell—a testimony of God's goodness and grace that people needed to hear. What he could not have known is that we would be still reading his story in every part of the world and in every generation up to today. That is an illustration of how our Master works miracles out of our messes. This brings us today to the last of the three unavoidable prerequisites that must take place when we travel right through the middle of the valley of repentance.

### ***Prerequisite Three: There must be a desire that reaches for victory***

I sincerely love this part. David does not quit with asking for God's forgiveness. David knew that if he was to be forgiven from his unrighteous heart, that a new heart would desire to tell the story of God's redemptive love, forgiveness, and restoration.

David could have prayed like some people, "God, I have done all this evil, and I am sorry and of no account. God, I know I do not deserve to be forgiven, but if you will just please forgive me in your grace, then I will stay out of your way. I will never amount to anything for the rest of my life, and I will wait quietly until the day I die and hope I go to Heaven. But at least I will not mess up your work again. I will keep my hands off of what you are trying to accomplish and I will stay out of your way." You will not find that prayer in your Bible.

On the contrary, David said, "God, I do not want to be cleansed just so that I feel good. I do not want to be forgiven just so that I get out of this despair." David said, "God, the biggest desire of my life is that I might honor you and serve you; and God, I know what is going to

happen when revival comes. I know what is going to happen when you touch me, God” (paraphrase).

Look again at Psalm 51:13-15. David is basically saying, “I have confidence that God is going to forgive me, and when he does, he is going to give me a purpose again. I will teach transgressors, and sinners will be converted to the Lord. And God, the music that was in my life is gone right now, but when you bring the music back, I will sing with joy! I will worship you! I will serve you!” (paraphrase)

That is how it happens; that is the result of traveling through the middle of the valley of repentance. When real repentance comes, on the other side of the valley, there is victory. The road may be bumpy for a while and there may be no detour around it. But the road to forgiveness and restoration runs through the middle of the valley of repentance. Glancing back through the rear-view mirror at all the hard bumps in the road, you will remember the struggles. But looking forward as you are moving out of the back side of the valley, you will see ahead of you that there is joy, triumph, and victory. There is exhilaration in being in the service of the Lord once again. David says, “I know I will be an effective witness. I know I will be able to sing again! I know there is joy on the other side of the valley” (paraphrase).

Many years ago, *Time Magazine* put out an article. It was about the American Medical Association and a special seminar that was held for cardiologists. One of the outstanding physicians in that field was speaking and decided to test his audience of about 1,100 in number. He said to the heart surgeons in the arena, “How many of you have had a cardiovascular checkup in the last 12 months?” *Time Magazine* reported that, amazingly, not one single surgeon could lift his/her hand.<sup>1</sup>

Repentance works like that. Unfortunately, those of us who are Christ-followers, when we finally decide to share our story to a lost world, are prone to say, “You need to repent of your sin and receive Jesus.” And we are telling them the truth, but they cannot hear what we are saying because we have not had a check-up lately. We must understand that we do not do all the repenting that we are ever going to need to do just when we get saved. It is to be the pattern for our lives on a daily basis until Jesus returns. Have you had a checkup lately?

King David had a checkup, and God unclogged the arteries where sin had stopped the flow of God’s love and grace. Consequently, David was not only forgiven, he was a changed man. The testimony of his life would forever be that traveling through the middle of the valley of repentance is well worth the trip. *There must be a despair that requests forgiveness, there must be a disgust that requires change, and there must be a desire that reaches for victory.*

## Respond

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<sup>1</sup> Irvine H. Page “Cardiology: The Doctor’s Heart Attack” *Time Magazine*, 03 Nov 1967. Accessed 31 May 2020. <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,837466,00.html>

David really believed that he was going to be forgiven. Was that arrogance or was David given some insight into the truth that he would be forgiven?

Why was David not content with just being forgiven?

## Day 5

*David King, author*

### Read

#### Psalms 51:18–19

*<sup>18</sup> May it please you to prosper Zion,  
to build up the walls of Jerusalem.  
<sup>19</sup> Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous,  
in burnt offerings offered whole;  
then bulls will be offered on your altar.*

### Reflect

If you are a parent, you know what it is like to be hurt even by those you love. I heard a man tell about a time when his daughter had disobeyed. They had a family meeting on the matter, and her dad and mom decided that she would be deprived of going to a party on the weekend.

The more she thought about it, the more unhappy she became about the punishment. Finally, she said an abusive curse word at her father, and it just cut him to the heart. The father sat there and suffered for a little while trying to get over what she had said.

Moments later, he felt her presence behind his back. He felt her finger tips reach around his chin. Through her tears, she cried, “Daddy, I hurt you a little while ago, didn’t I?”

He said, “Yes, Darling, you really did.”

Her tears flooded his head as she wailed and said, “Oh, I’m so sorry I hurt my daddy. I’ll never do it again.”

On this last day of looking at Psalm 51, ask yourself this question: “When was the last time I told God that?” If we knew how much God loved us and how much He suffered when we sin, then we would quickly come clean with God and deal with any unconfessed sin in our life. Confession is a rough, rugged process. David finally came to that understanding because when he got ready to confess his sin, his mind abominated his sin, his heart abhorred his sin, and

his will abandoned his sin. David learned the high cost of committing sin, of confessing sin, and of cleansing sin.

As I stated earlier in the week, it is interesting to note that in Psalm 51, there are three different pictures that David paints for sin. In the first verse, he says, "...blot out my transgressions." In that picture, we see that sin is like debt. The word "*blot*" means "*to obliterate*," "*to wipe the record clean*," or "*to take the debt off of the books*." What David is saying is, "Oh God, wipe Heaven's record clear. Wipe my sin off the books of Heaven" (paraphrase). And the Bible says that when Jesus Christ came, on the cross he blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us (Colossians 2:14). Sin is like debt.

Sin is also like dirt. Notice that David said in Psalm 51:2, "*Wash away all my iniquity...*" It is the picture in those days of taking the dirty clothes down to the river, putting those clothes on the rocks, and getting boards to beat the dirt out of the clothes. David is saying here, "Oh God, I have dirt in my heart. I have dirt in my soul. I have dirt in my mind. I have dirt in my body. Oh God, beat the dirt out of my life" (paraphrase). Sin is like debt. Sin is like dirt.

But also, sin is like disease. That is why David said in the second verse, "*...and cleanse me from my sin*." He said in the seventh verse, "*Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow*."

The word "*cleanse*," or in some translations, "*purge*" is a very interesting word. It has, as its root, the very word for "*sin*." You could translate it this way: "*De-sin me*," or "*Decontaminate me*."

David also requests that he be cleansed with hyssop. What in the world is hyssop? You might be wondering, "You know, I have been reading this passage all week, and I wonder what hyssop is. I hope he will tell us."

Well, since you asked, I will be glad to tell you. In the Bible days, hyssop was a slender, leafy bush that grew out of the cracks in the walls. Its texture was such that it made it a good brush or applicator. When you follow hyssop in the Bible, you will see that it was used as an application brush in a series of circumstances. For instance, the night of the Passover, when the death angel was to pass over, they were to take that hyssop, take the blood of the lamb, and brush it over the doorposts. When the death angel saw the blood applied by the hyssop, it passed over that house. That is a pretty basic description of hyssop.

However, the most significant thing to me about hyssop is the beautiful picture of the cleansing of the leper that we find in Leviticus 14. Of all the diseases in the Bible, there is no disease that so graphically portrays the terrible, devastating results of sin as the disease of leprosy. Leprosy starts with just a little white spot on the skin somewhere. Then it gallops all over the body until the body finally collapses. There really was no cure for leprosy in those days. Spiritually speaking, sin is the leprosy of the human soul. It is the cancer, the Ebola, or the COVID-19 of humanity's spiritual experience.

God had an unusual method for the cleansing of the leper when he/she had been miraculously healed from this disease which had no cure, and it is beautifully portrayed in Leviticus 14.

Lepers who had been healed were required by law to go and present themselves before the chief priest. (That is why Jesus told the ten lepers that he healed to go and show themselves to the priest in order to do the lawful thing, fulfilling the Levitical Law requirement—Luke 17:14). The priest went on a spiritual scavenger hunt: he would get two living birds, an earthen vessel, some cedar wood, some scarlet, and some hyssop. With the wood, he would take the scarlet thread and tie the hyssop to the wood in order to make a brush. And all of this is a beautiful picture of the coming of the Lord Jesus into the world. You see, the Lord Jesus Christ came down to this earth and stuffed himself in a clay vessel of humanity. The bird that is killed over the running water is a beautiful picture of the death and the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The living bird where the blood is applied and let loose in the open field, is a beautiful picture of our resurrected and ascended Lord who takes the blood back into the Holy of Holies in Heaven. And it is with this hyssop that the blood that had been shed was applied.

It is the statement of an eternal principle in the Bible that only Jesus' blood makes atonement for the soul. That is the only way David got his sin cleansed and the only way we can get our sin cleansed. There had to be the shedding of blood.

Every time I think of Jesus shedding his blood for my sin, I am reminded that Zechariah prophesied, "On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity" (Zechariah 13:1).

Many years ago, at the Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco, in connection with the festivities, they had a religious service. And in that service, they had a minister speaking, and it became very apparent that he was not in sympathy with the Faith. He did not contend for the truth. At the conclusion of his message, he delivered a blistering attack on the blood of Jesus. And when he sat down, a little lady stood alone in that crowd, and she began to softly sing William Cowper's hymn:

*There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;  
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.*

By the time she finished that verse, several hundred were on their feet singing...

*The dying thief rejoice to see,  
That fountain in his day;  
And there, may I, though vile as he,  
Wash all my sins away.*

By the time they finished that verse, thousands were on their feet singing...

*E'er since by faith, I saw the stream,  
Thy flowing wounds supply;  
Redeeming love has been my theme,*

*And shall be till I die.*

The author indicates that the singing of this hymn was a defiant reaction from the attack of the speaker.<sup>2</sup>

But not only did the blood have to be shed, but the Scripture teaches that the blood had to be sprinkled. Hebrews 9:22 says, “...and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”<sup>1</sup> Peter 1:2 says, “...to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood...”

And the priest would take the blood that had been shed, and with that hyssop, would sprinkle it seven times on that leper. There stood that blood-splattered, blood-sprinkled leper on whom the blood had been applied, and he knew that, not only was he cured, he was declared clean.

When you received the Lord Jesus as your personal Savior, miraculously the blood of Jesus was applied to your heart. The Bible also teaches that as we continue to repent of our everyday sins, our sins are forgiven and our relationship with the Lord is always restored. Let us never forget that the road to forgiveness and restoration leads us right through the middle of the valley of repentance. There is no detour. We must pass this way.

## **Respond**

It is not possible for any human being to know the extent of the love that God has for us. We know he loves us, but the extent of his love is unfathomable. If you were able to know how much God loved you, would have a different result in how you respond to his leading in your life?

David paints the picture of sin being like debt, dirt, and disease. Are there any other analogies you can think of that sin represents? In what ways have you seen those in your life? What have you done about them?

Regarding committing, confessing, and cleansing of sin, what have you learned this week from Psalm 51 about your own sin?

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<sup>2</sup> Rubel Shelly, *The Names of Jesus: An In-Depth Exploration of the Christ*. 1999, West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing Co., Inc. pp 51-52.